1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda
18

CHAPTER II

THE TODA PEOPLE

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I DO not propose to describe at any length the physical characters of the Todas.[1] It must be sufficient to say here that the people differ remarkably in general appearance, and perhaps still more remarkably in general bearing, from the other inhabitants of Southern India. The average height of the men is about 5 ft. 7 in., and that of the women 5 ft. 1 in.; both are well-proportioned, and the men robustly built. Their heads are distinctly dolichocephalic, the cephalic index of the men being 73·3. The shaved heads of the children show very well the great length, and probably owing to the special method of shaving (see Figs. 63 and 64), this feature is in them exaggerated so as to seem almost abnormal.

142

The nose is usually well-formed and not especially broad, the nasal index being 74·9. It is often distinctly rounded in profile. The skin is of a rich brown colour, distinctly lighter than that of most of the Dravidian inhabitants of Southern India. The skins of the women are lighter than those of the men. There is much hair on the bodies of the men, who usually grow thick beards, and the hair of the head is luxuriant in both men and women. The men are strong and very agile; the agility being most in evidence when they have to catch their infuriated buffaloes at the funeral ceremonies. They stand fatigue well, and often travel great distances. One day I met an old man about seventy years of age going to the market at Gudalur for a supply

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[1] Those who wish for information on this point should consult the articles by Mr. Edgar Thurston in the *Bulletins* of the Madras Museum, vol. i., pp. 148 and 207, and vol. iv., p. 2.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

this district.[1] In considering this matter, we may anticipate that even if the Todas and any of the tribes or castes of Malabar had the same origin, marked differences would have been produced by the long sojourn of the former on the Nilgiri plateau. How long the Todas have been on the Nilgiri Hills no one can say, but we may safely conclude that a very long time must have been necessary to produce the wide divergence in custom and belief which is found to separate them even from those other inhabitants of India whom they most closely resemble. If the Todas came from Malabar, they came from a country differing enormously in temperature and in general physical and climatic characters from the Nilgiri plateau. Life on the hills must almost certainly have altered the physical characters of the people, and it is perhaps now hopeless to expect that any exact resemblance would be found with the existing races of Malabar even if the Todas are an offshoot of one of them. Nevertheless, in comparing the physical measurements of the Todas, which we owe to Mr. Thurston, with those of various Malabar races taken by Mr. Fawcett, it would seem that the differences are not very great, and in the measurements to which anthropologists attach most importance, those of the head and nose, they are very slight.

In the table on the following page I give the chief measurements in centimeters for Todas, Nairs, and Nambutiris.

The average dimensions of the heads and noses of the Todas correspond very closely with those of the Nairs, and the differences from the Nambutiris are nowhere great. It must be remembered that the measurements on the Todas were taken by one observer, and those on the Nairs and Nambutiris by another,[2] and this may partly account for

[1] In a paper which I have only seen since the above was written (*C. R. de la Soc. de Biol.*, 1905, t. lix, p. 123) M. Louis Lapicque has called attention to the resemblance between Todas and Nairs. He regards the Todas as pure or almost pure examples of one of the two races of which he believes the Dravidian population of India to be composed, the Nairs being more mixed with the negroid element, which forms the other component of the population according to M. Lapicque.

[2] It must also be borne in mind that the figures of the Nambutiris and those of some of the Todas are based on the measurement of twenty-five individuals only in each case.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

141 the large divergence in the case of the maxillo-zygomatic
144 index, which is calculated from the bigoniac and bizygomatic
174 measurements, in both of which there is considerable scope for differences between different observers. The only other measurements which show any decided divergence are the stature and the length from the middle finger to the patella, and the greater stature of the Todas may well be the result of their more healthy environment. The cubit of the Todas also differs very decidedly from that of the Nambutiris, though little longer than this dimension of the Nairs.

	Todas.[1]	186 Nairs.	25 Nambutiris.
Stature	169·8	165 6	162·3
Span	175·9	175·1	170·0
Chest	82·0	80·6	83·7
Middle finger to patella	12·0	10·1	10·5
Shoulders	39·3	40·0	40·7
Left cubit	47·0	46·2	44·2
Left hand, length	18·8	18·5	18·0
,, ,, width	8·1	8·3	7·8
Hips	25·7	26·0	26·2
Left foot, length	25·0	25·4	24·5
,, ,, width	9·2	8·8	
Cephalic length	19·4	19·2	19·2
,, width	14·2	14·1	14·6
,, index	73·3	73·1	76·3
Bigoniac	9·6	10·4	10·6
Bizygomatic	12·7	13·1	13·2
Maxillo-zygomatic index	75·7	80·1	80·4
Nasal height	4·7	4·8	4·9
,, width	3·6	3·6	3·7
,, index	76·6	76·8	75·5

We do not know the probable errors of these different groups of measurements, but the agreement between the Todas and the two castes of Malabar is so close as to suggest strongly a racial affinity between the three.[2]

142 The hairiness of the Toda is perhaps the feature in which
144 he differs most obviously from the races of Malabar, while the
174 robustness of his physique and general bearing are perhaps almost as striking. The latter qualities may be entirely due

[1] Some of these measurements are based on the examination of eighty-two men, others are derived from twenty-five men only.

[2] The relations existing between Nair women and Nambutiri men must have brought about an approximation of the two Malabar castes in physical characters, even if they were originally of different ethnical origin.

TABLE II.

Sizes of Heads in both Sexes of the Todas, as obtained by Calliper Measurements.

Position of Callipers		Average size		Sizes of Individuals, in inches															
				Males										Females					
From	To	M	F	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Occipital spine .	Individuality .	7·39	7·14	7½	7½	7½	7½	7½	7½	7½	7½	7½	7⅝	7½	6⅞	7½	7½	7	6¾	7½	7½
Occipital spine .	Hole of ear .	4·67	4·70	4¾	4⅝	5	4½	4½	4	4½	4⅝	5	4⅞	4½	4⅝	4½	4⅜	5½	4½	4⅝	5
Individuality . .	Hole of ear .	4·94	4·50	5	4⅝	5	5	4⅞	5	4⅝	5½	5	4⅞	4½	4⅝	4½	4½	4½	4½	4½	4⅝
Firmness . .	Hole of ear .	5·75	5·78	5¾	6	5½	5½	5¾	5¾	6	5¾	5¾	6	6	5½	6	6	5¾	5½	5¾	6
Destructiveness .	Destructiveness	5·41	5·17	5½	5½	5½	5½	5½	5½	5	5½	5½	5½	5½	5½	5½	5½	5	5½	5	5½
Cautiousness .	Cautiousness .	5·44	5·17	5½	5½	5½	5½	5½	5½	5½	5½	5½	5⅝	5½	5⅝	5½	5½	5	5	5	5½
Ideality . .	Ideality .	4·39	4·37	4½	4	4½	4½	4⅝	4½	4⅝	4½	4½	4½	4½	4⅝	4⅝	4½	4½	4½	4½	4½
Constructiveness	Constructiveness	4·91	4·66	4⅝	4⅝	5	5	4⅞	5	4⅝	4⅝	5½	5	4½	4⅝	4⅝	4⅝	4⅝	4½	4½	4⅝
Circumference of head through Concentrativeness and Eventuality		22·21	21·37	22	22	—	—	21½	—	22	22½	22	22⅝	21½	20½	22	21½	20½	—	22	—

NOTE.—The heads are not in the same succession as those in Table No. 1.

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

CHAP. III.

33 in. Photograph No. 7 is the picture of one of the most sturdy men of the tribe.

142 Height. Of men, from 5 ft. 4 in. to 6 ft. 1 in.; average about 141 5 ft. 8 in. Of women, from 4 ft. 10 in. to 5 ft. 4½ in.; average about 5 ft. 1 in. There are no very short people.

Weight. Of men from about 110 to 155 lbs. There are reasons why the weight of women cannot be accurately ascertained; but it is believed to vary between 90 and 130 lbs.

142 Shoulders. Angular, never sloping, generally with a flat back.

Muscles. Never large; hard rather than full; some decidedly below the average.

The general mass of the tribe are fairly, often well grown; straight and lank, without deformity, but without any really fine people.

The men's carriage is erect, free and unconstrained, without 157 being either bold or athletic. Their manners and tone of voice are self-possessed, suave, quiet, and solemn: the women substituting a pleasing cheerfulness for solemnity. When quiescent, their expression and carriage has much oriental repose in it.

The temperament of such a people as has just been described would in the main be fibrous, with some of the sanguine or the nervous in individuals; especially so in the female sex, many of whom I noticed show a considerable amount of the nervous with advancing years. Such a national temperament is more suited to the display of qualities requiring muscular energy for their support, than of those in which the subtilty of intellect would take part.

141 We find the cranium, taken as a whole, to be of an average size; comprising certain very strong, and certain equally and lamentably weak, points of form. The singular uniformity in contour of all the heads has already been observed upon.

000 In order to form a correct, and therefore complete judgment of a man's character, it is not sufficient to take a

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

and his infant progeny have perished by neglect. That the Toda skull is remarkably well developed in all the domestic organs, and in the necessary perceptive—practical—faculties, a glance at the photographs in this book will show to everyone. CHAP. IX. 000

Next. In the dark prehistoric age, whose duration appears unlimited, but through which all families of man have passed, *that race which possessed the greatest capacity for overcoming obstacles*—taken in the very widest sense—must, *cæteris paribus*, inevitably have remained the survivor in struggles with the weaker, and therefore, by laws of progression, more primitive race. Now *these active qualities are invariably accompanied by large size in the groups of organs, which, situated at the sides of the cranium, form, when well developed, the brachycephalic head.*

The Toda tribe is entirely, and without individual exception, narrow-long-headed—dolichocephalic—every person in it, of both sexes, being deficient in every organ at the sides of the skull; and, as I have before stated, having the perceptive organs over the eyebrow (group I^2), and the Domestic group at the back of the head, large. If we add to these indications, the deficiency in moral and in superior mental organisation which appears to be an universal attribute of almost entirely undeveloped peoples, we can, I think, make up our minds without hesitation, as to what form of skull is the most primitive of those of which we have yet discovered remains. 141 000

In races which, though still dolichocephalic, are seemingly *growing*—advancing towards brachycephaly—we find the *sides of the skull in stages of development*, varying in directions and degrees of growth, with each different race. This phenomenon is capable of explanation:—We might anticipate that so long as the marriage practice of a tribe is what Mr. M'Lennan has termed[1] endogamous, the form in skull of that tribe—as the Todas—from every individual being affected by

[1] M'Lennan, 'Primitive Marriage.'

The total number of Todas, male and female, in Todanâd and Mekanâd in 1835 was officially* reported to be 194, in 45 villages.

Todas are divided into two classes, which cannot intermarry, viz.:—

1. Dêvalyâl.
2. Tarsezhâl.

The first class consists of the Peiki clan, corresponding in some respects to Brahmans. The second of the four remaining clans, the Pekkan, Kuttan, Kenna, and Todi.

The Peikis eat apart; and a Peiki woman may not go to a village of the Tarsezhâl, although the women of the latter may visit Peikis.

The Peikis are not, however, like the Brahmans, recognised as superiors. On the contrary the other clans say, "Are they not our servants?"

Peiki women are called Kotti, those of the other clans Panni.

For a description of the men and women I quote from Dr. Shortt's *Tribes of the Neilgherries*, page 4.

"ETHNOLOGY.—*Toda Tribe.*—In physique the Todas are by far the most pre-
"possessing as a tribe, and it is this superiority in personal appearance, in conjunction
"with their singular costume, peculiar mode of wearing their hair, their bold and
"self-possessed deportment, and unique social and domestic institutions, that have
"at all times attracted for them the greatest share of attention and interest from
"Europeans. In complexion the Todas are of a dull copper hue,† not deeper or
"darker in colour than most of the inhabitants of the plains; but they are darker than
"the Badagas and many of the Kotas, a few of whom are met with fairer even than
"the Badagas. The Kurumbas and Irulas are not only darker than the Todas, but
"strikingly so to the eye. The Todas are tall in stature, well-proportioned, and in
"features partake of the Caucasian type:—*Head*, slightly elongated like the Hindoos;
"*forehead*, rather narrow and receding, measuring 2½ inches from the root of the nose
"to the growth of hair and scalp; *eyebrows*, thick and approaching each other; *eyes*,
"moderately large, well formed, expressive, and often intelligent; *irides*, varying in
"colour from hazel to brown;‡ *nose*, long, large, and well-formed, generally aquiline—
"in some slightly rounded, arched, or what is termed Roman, in others cogitative—
"measuring from root to tip 2⅞ inches, and height from base of ala to ridge 1½ inches,
"breadth of ala from side to side 1½ inches; *upper lip*, narrow; *lower lip*, thick or
"full—and face covered with a close thick moustache, whiskers, and beard, all of

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* See letter from Principal Collector of Malabar, 9th February 1835.
Mr. Sullivan, referring to this letter in an official memorandum, dated 20th August 1836, says:—
"This does not tally with former returns, and is certainly incorrect. The Census of 1826 gave a
"total of 326 for the whole Hills; and there is no doubt of their numbers having increased, since
"Captain Harkness counted 300 men, nearly half that number of women, and about as many boys and
"girls at a Toda funeral."

† Agreeing in this respect with Paul Broca' Table, No. 28.

‡ The majority being intermediate with Nos. 1 & 2 of Paul Broca' Tables.

3: Breeks G-5 (no date) 1873 Toda

141 "which are worn full; *ears*, of moderate size, and lying close to the skull; *teeth*,
"white, clean, and regular; head well covered with black hair, of moderate
142 "fineness, and worn in a peculiar fashion, combed smoothly around from the
"crown, and cropped evenly in line with the eyebrows, and covering the head very
"much like a natural skull-cap; body of the male, hirsute, especially on back and
"chest; *figure and contour of person*, generally attractive, and carriage graceful.
"Of 35 men, I found the average weight and measurements as follow:—Weight,
"121·40 lbs.; height, 63·30 inches; circumference of head, 20·81 inches; neck,
"12·81 inches; chest, 32·22 inches; arms, 9·36 inches; thighs, 16·64 inches;
"length of arm from acromion process to tip of fingers, 32 inches; length of hand,
"7·50 inches—breadth, 3·50 inches; lower extremities, well proportioned, with
"moderate calves; feet, well formed and arched, length of foot, 11·50 inches—
"width of sole, 4 inches.

142 "*Females of the Toda Tribe*—The women of this tribe are generally tall and
"stalwart; good-looking both in features and person, with a smooth, clear, and delicate
362 "skin; fresh and rather fair in complexion. They have more of an aquiline nose
"than the men, which, however, does not diminish from the strong feminine cast of
"their features. The hair is of a lighter colour than in the male, parted in the
"centre, and carefully combed around and thrown behind the ears, and left
"hanging free over the shoulders and back, in a mass of flowing curls in some,
"and in others, wavy. I have not seen any of the women with very long hair.
"In those I met, it did not exceed 1½ or 2 feet in length, and was of moderate
157 "fineness. The females, like the males, are self-possessed in a great degree, and
"readily enter into conversation with strangers, be they white or black. It has
609 "been averred that the Toda females, as a class, are strikingly handsome and comely
142 "in features; but although many of them certainly possess charms in person of a
"robust character, I cannot say that I met with even one with a handsome or
"pretty face, much less any with features approaching in perfection or beauty to a
"classical model.

141 "From an average of 25 the following weights and measurements were obtained:—
"Height, 60·25 inches; weight, 110·80 lbs.; circumference of head, 20·8 inches;
"neck, 11·11 inches; arm, 8·90 inches; chest, 30·11 inches; thighs, 14·6 inches;
"length of arm, 27 inches; length of hand, 6·75 inches, breadth, 3 inches; forehead
"from root of nose to growth of hair on scalp, 2 inches." (*Plates* III., IV., V., VI., VII.)

142 The facial peculiarities of the Todas are not so great as they at first sight appear.
When they shave and wear turbans, which many now do, they are hardly to be
302 distinguished from other natives. Their frank bold manners are, however, entirely
peculiar to themselves, and very attractive. A Toda laughs without disguise or restraint
157 at anything in an Englishman that strikes him as ludicrous, and generally seems to
609 consider himself as an equal or superior. I suspected them of a little hoaxing
sometimes. It is impossible not to like them, if only for their independence and good-
humour.

7: Thurston E-5 (no date) 1909
AW60 Toda AW60

304 2. Aged 28. Tattooed with a single dot on chin;
[531] rings and dots on chest, outer side of upper arms, back of left hand, below calves, above ankles, and across dorsum of feet. Wears thread armlet ornamented with young cowries on right forearm; thread armlet and two
[301] heavy ornamental brass armlets on left upper arm; ornamental brass bangle and glass bead bracelet on left wrist; brass ring on left little finger; two steel rings on left ring finger; bead necklet ornamented with cowries.

3. Aged 35. Tattooed like the preceding, with
[531] the addition of an elaborate device of rings and dots on the back.

4. Aged 35. Linen bound round elbow joint, to
[301] prevent chafing of heavy brass armlets. Cicatrices of sores in front of elbow joint, produced by armlets.

5. Aged 23. Has one child. Tattooed only below calves, and above ankles.

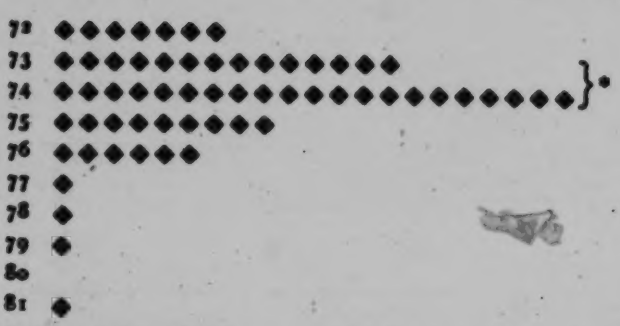
141 The following are the more important physical measurements of the Toda men, whom I have examined:—

	Av.	Max.	Min.
	CM.	CM.	CM.
Stature	169·8	186·8	157·6
Cephalic length ...	19·4	20·4	18·2
Do. breadth ...	14·2	15·2	13·3
Do. index ...	73·3	81·3	68·7
Nasal height ...	4·7	4·9	4·6
Do. breadth ...	3·6	3·8	3·4
Do. index ...	74·9	79·9	70·

Allowing that the cephalic index is a good criterion of racial or tribal purity, the following analysis of the Toda indices is very striking:—

69 ◆◆
70 ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆
71 ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60



141

A thing of exceeding joy to the Todas was my Salter's hand-dynamometer, the fame of which spread from mand to mand, and which was circulated among the crowd at funerals. Great was the disgust of the assembled males, on a certain day, when the record of hand-grip for the morning (73 lbs.) was carried off by a big-boned female, who became the unlovely heroine of the moment. The largest English feminine hand-grip, recorded in my laboratory note-book, is only 66 lbs. One Toda man, of fine physique, not satisfied with his grip of 98 lbs., went into training, and fed himself up for a few days. Thus prepared, he returned to accomplish 103 lbs., the result of more skilful manipulation of the machine rather than of a liberal dietary of butter-milk.

123 141

The routine Toda dietary is said to be made up of the following articles, to which must be added strong drinks purchased at the toddy shops :—

262

(*a*) Rice boiled in whey.

(*b*) Rice and jaggery (crude sugar) boiled in water.

(*c*) Broth or curry made of vegetables purchased in the bazar, wild vegetables and pot-herbs, which, together with ground orchids, the Todas may often be seen rooting up with a sharp-pointed digging-stick on

[443]

* Average 73.

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

feet high range of peaks that constitutes the culminating point reached from north to south by the Western Ghats, is visible in clear weather through a distinctly blue haze.

From the capital of the district, Ootacamund ("One-Stone House" in Tamil, shortened to *Ooty* by British residents), seat of the Government Administrator called the Collector, asphalted motor roads lead out in all directions over the grass-covered downs, which are interspaced here and there in the shallow parts with *sholas* or woods of short trees and bushes. The scenery is very beautiful, and the climate is excellent. Europeans from Madras city and from elsewhere, ever since the beginning of the 18th century, have made use of the station, the highest in India, from which to escape the insalubrious damp heat of the lowlands.

It is here on this green plateau that the Todas live. In their own language, they call themselves *Olkh*,[1] "men", their other name by which all outsiders know them, Toda, being from the Badaga language, *Toda-ma*, "chief". Their houses, *arsh*, which are of a particular kind, made of slit bamboo and planks and thatched, in the shape of Nissen huts, have no chimney and no windows worth mentioning, while the door is barely two feet high, obliging those who enter through it to crawl in on all fours. These dwellings are grouped in small numbers, never more than four or five at a time, forming *munds* (in Toda *mad*), and are scattered all over the hills, near sholas, and often very far away from each other. This spread appearance is apt to be deceptive to begin with, as it would seem that each "village" is practically independent, and leads a life of its own. Actually this is not the case, since, regardless of the distance which separates various munds from each other (often twenty miles and more), tribal divisions make it perfectly clear which hamlets belong together and which do not.

The people have a fine physical appearance. They are, on an average, generally taller than most Indians, the tallest Toda being something like six foot six. The men are profusely bearded, and wear their hair

[1] Romanization of Toda here will be in accordance with the following personal transcription:

a = hat	ee = meet	ai = bite	l = lot	s = soon	v = vat
a = hut	f = fun	j = French	m = me	t = top	w = won
b = best	g = gone	dj = job	n = no	th = Greek theta	y = yoke
d = do	gh = Greek gamma	sh = she	o = hot	z = zero	z = simply tonic
dh = Greek delta	ng = ring	tch = chap	ð = word	u = blue	
e = met	h = aspirate	k = kit	oi = hoy	u = cook	
ei = date	i = hit	kh = Greek chi	p = pot	oo = moon	
			r = rot	ü = French	